## THE BANNER SERIES OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES



AM tired of men," cried Princess Osra, "and of suitors, and of princes. I will go to Zenda and ride in the forest all alone."

"You will meet men even there," said the king,

"How do you know that, sire?" she asked with a smile.

"At least, I have found It impossible to avoid

it impossible to avoid meeting women any-where."
"I do not think it is

"I do not think it is the same thing," observ-ed Osra, smiling again. The king said no more, but let her go her own way; and to Zenda she went, and rode in the forest all alone, meeting for many days no man at all, though perhaps she thought a little of those whem she had met and (who can tell?) now and

all, though perhaps she thought a little of those whem she had met and (who can tell?) now and then of one whom she should some day meet. For the mind loves to entertain itself with such idle musings, and they are hardly conscious till a sudden smile or a beat of the kingdom's frontier, which skirts the extremity of the kingdom's frontier, which skirts the extremity of the forest on the west. And breaking her thoughts off, half ashamed of there, she looked up and saw a very fine and powerful horse tethered to a tree a few yards away, saddled and bridled. Then she said to herself with a sight "Alasi here is a man, as my brother said." And she shook her head very sorrowfully.

The next instant she saw, as she had foreboded, a man approaching her; and the matter was as bad as could be, for he was young and handsome finely dressed, carrying a good sword by his side, and a brace of pistols mounted in silver in his belt. And he held a feathered that in his hand, and, advancing with a deep bow, kenit on one knee by the princess' horse, sayinb: "Madam, if you will, you can do me a great service."

"If it be in my power, sir," she answered—for since fate impelled her to meet a man, she would not show him rudeness—"I am at your service.

"You see my horse thore, madam? He is as dear as my life to me, and I fear I shall lose him unless I have your aid;" and he rose and stood looking at the princess. "Why, what threatens him?" she asked.

"I will tell you madam. I come from across the frontier; from a secluded village nearly ten miles from here. There is a rich fellow there, a farmen, Otho by name, who is, saving your presence, a plaguy boastful fellow. And he is to-day betrothed."

"And do you also love the lady, sir?" asked Osra, thinking she had come at the cause of his trouble.

"You t, madam, But this Otho boasted and vaunted so intolerably of her beauty and of his own prowess and attraction, that last night I, led away by emulation (ray, I am ashamed to say that I had also drunk a flask of wine), wagered with him my "You cannot live without your horse?" she asked in

"At least, madam," he answered in some confusion, "his loss would go near to breaking my heart."
"But is this Lotta so handsome that you can find none to surpass her?"
"She is, indeed, wonderfully handsome. They call her

"She is, indeed, wonderfully handsome. They call her in the village the most beautiful girl in the world."
"Then, sir, it seems to me that your wager was most rash and improvident. For you are certain to lose it."
"Alasi yes." he answeed, in great distress, "I am criain to lose; for there are, I think, only two ladies in the world who could save me, and one would not."
"Two ladies? Who are they?"
"Madam," said he, "before you came in sight, I sat desolate and despairing on the ground; and what I said to myself was: "If what men say is true, there is only one lady who could save me. But how shall I, poor Christian Hantz, come at the Princess Osra? And would she go with me, and put on a country girl's dress, and go to the feast with me? "Ias, it is impossible! And there is no other lady in the world beautiful enough!" is no other lady in the world beautiful enough!

"Well, sir, what then?" asked Osra, playing with her whip, and smothering a smile, "Then, madam," said Christian, "I looked up and saw you, and I cried, 'A fig for the Princess Osra! For here is a lady more beautiful than all they tell me of Princess. will throw myself at her feet and pray her in help me."

Osra hid her smile, and so busy was she with

this task that she did not perceive that Christian also hid a suite; but she thought that he did not know her, whereas he had seen her several times, and had this day tracked her in the forest, knowing that she was accus-

mother's cottage; madam, where my mother

"And when could she be back at this spot?

"By 5 in the afternoon, madam. I would myself es-

"Hy 5 in the afternoon, madam. I would myself esport her."

"And why, sir, should she rescue you from the straits to which your folly has led you?"

"Alas! madam, for no reason, unless, by a divine miracle, she could prove as kind as she is beautiful."

"You have a rash tongue, sir, in other matters than the making of wagers." And she looked at him, for she was very sorely tempted to do what he prayed of her, and she said: "Has the Princess Osra ever ridden through your village?"

"Never, madam."

"But some one there may know her face, and then they will think nothing of mine."

"It is unlikely that any one there should have seen a picture of her; for they are quist folk, and do not go abroad?"

"Besides, in a peasant's dress—" began Osra, medita-

"It is unlikely that any one there should have seen a picture of her; for they are quiet folk, and do not go abroad?"

"Besides, in a peasant's dress—" began Osra, meditatively. But she stopped, blushing and laughing. And Christian caught her hand and kissed it, crying: "For heaven's sake, come, madam!" And he was so carnest, and his carnestness so became his bronzed face and bright eyes, that Osra could not deny him; but she swore him to secreey, and agreed to ride with him, blaming herself all the while very greatly, and blaming yet more that fate which would not allow her to be quit of the troublesome race of men, even in the recesses of the forest of Zenda.

"Turning their horses, therefore, toward the frontier, they set them at a smart canter, for there was little time to lose if they were to come to the feast by 1 c'clock; and shortly before noon, having struck a bypath through the trees, they came on a small cottage that stood apart and by itself, and a hill rose from it.

"On the other side of the hill lies the village, madam," said Christian, jumping from his horse, "And this is my cottage. Hello, there, mether!

An old woman came out, peatly and cleanly clad. Christian ran up to her, spoke to her briefly, and brought her to Osra. The wonthy dame, bewildered by the appearance and stately air of the princess, did nothing but courtesy and murnur incoherent thanks; but Osra, now caught by the excitement of the enterprise, clapped her hands, cying: "Quick, quick, or we shall be too fate!" So Christian lifted her down and ied away the horse to a shed behind the cottage. But the old women led Osra in and took her to the bedroom, where lay a dress such as the peasant girls wore. Osra took up the skirt and looked at it ouiously.

"Must I, indeed, wear this?" she asked. "And I am somewhat tall, mother."

The old woman said that nothing would serve save the dress, and Osra sighed. Yet, as there was no help for it, she suffered the old woran to help her in getting it on.

ng it on. So the door was shut, and Christian sat smiling in the sun outside, well pleased 4: the success of his auda-cious scheme, and feeling Otho's crowns already in his Still less did he doubt of this most desirable result

Courtesy of Christian the Highwayman A ZENDA STORY

By ANTHONY HOPE, Author of "The Prisoner of Zenda," "The Dolly Dialogues," Etc.

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when the door of the cottage again opened, and Osracame out, blushing, and yet bitting her lips to keep back her laughter. Her halr was plaited in two long plaits; she wore I white bodier, and over it a jacket of black 'velvet, and a red skirt hung full from her waist to but a very little below her knee; then came hose, of red alsofor it was a holiday, and the best of all were wornand stout, square-toed shoes. And Osra in her heart loved all except the shoes, yet she declared that she loathed all, except the shoes. And Christian, with eyes cast more demurely on the ground, prayed her to forgive the sad necessity, yet assured her that Lotta would die of ency that very day.

give the sad necessity, yet assured her that Lotta would die of envy that very day.

"Let us go, then," said Osra. "For the sooner we go, the sooner will it be done, and I can get rid of these ridiculous clothes. Heaven have mercy on me, and grant that I may meet no one who knows me!"

They were mounting the hill now, the old woman standing at the cottage door and watching. When they reached the top, Osra saw a small village nestling in the valley below, and the sound of music caught her ear. At this a sudden fear selzed her, and, putting out her hand, she caught Christian by the sleeve, saying: "Will they know me?"

eyes fell on a ring that the princess were, a gem engraved with the noyal arms. "Not they," said he, "if that ring;" and for a moment he looked in

you conceal that ring;" and for a moment he looked in her face, and he smiled.

Osra gave a little cry as she hastily plucked the ring from her finger and gave it to him, saying: "Keep it safe, and do not forget to give it me again." But she would not meet his glance, for she began from now to suspect that he knew who she was.

The sound of music came from a solid, square-built house that stood on the outskirts of the village, and, coming near, they saw a long table spread in the shada near the house, and a company of men and women seated at it. The princess was somewhat comforted to find that the girls' dresses were in all respects like her own, though hers seemed newer and more handsome; therefore she took courage, and put her arm inside Christian's arm, saying: "Since I have accepted the part, I will play it. Come, sir, let us go and challenge Lotin. Your horse is at stake."

"He is in no danger," said Christian, "and I am worth a thousand crowns." And his eyes most plainly added the reason which led him to these comfortable conclusions.

Now, at this moment, Othe, having toasted the company and accepted their good wishes, was standing up before them all. Lotia standing by him, her hand in his and he vowed (as was but right) all manner of love and devotion to her, and declared that she was the prettiest girl in the world. And, in iruth, she was very pretty, being, although low of statue, most admirably formed, having golden hair, the pinkest of cheeks and large blue eyes that followed a man about in a most appealing and distracting manner; so that Otho had good reason to be content, and would have come to no harm had it not been for that old extravagance of lovers which will not allow this world to hold more than one pretty gil—the truth boing, of course, quito otherwise. But, led on by this infatuation, Otho crick: "I are any man to find so pretty girl." As for Master Christian, whose wager you heard, why, this evening his fine horse shall feed in my stable!"

"Softly, friend Othe, softly,"

'Softly, friend Othe, softly," came to the ears of the

stable!"

"Softly, friend Othe, softly," came to the ears of the feasters, from beyond the trees. "Mistress Lotta is very pretty, but I have here a girl whom some think handsomer. Well, this worthy company shall judge." And Christian came from the shelter of the trees, leading Osra by the hand, and he set her epposite to Lotta, where all could see her. And all looked and beheld her with amazement. But none spoke. So they rested for a long while. Christian smiling, and Osra's eyes being set on Lotta, while Othe did nothing but gaze at Osra.

Presently, a low murmur began to run along the table. "Who is she?" asked some one; but none could answer. "Who is she?" asked some one; but none could answer. "Who is she?" asked some one; but none could answer. "And when other asked whence she came, he made the same answer. But one young fellow leaned from his place and plucked Christian's sleave, saying: "Is she promised to you?" And at this Christian frowned, answering: "At least she is not for you," while Osra, overhearing, blushed mightly. Then Othe, still saying, nothing, suddenly lugged out a geat purse of money, and flung it violently into the middle of the table with a curse; and Christian with a mocking lift of his hat, came forward, and, taking it, tossed it un and down in hig hand, crying: "Is it fair weight, neighbon Othe"

Otho did not heed him; but he turned suddenly to Lotta and put his arm round her waist, saying; "Ay, it is true. The devil have sent her; but it is true. Yet you are pretty, too, my lass." For Lotta, after looking at all the company and at Osra, had been so sorely wounded in her pride and robbed of her triumph that, poor child, she had begun to weep, hiding her face in her hands; and Otho was trying to comfort her, though, lover as he was, he could not for the life of him declare that she was more beautiful than the girl whom Christian had brought. And they all moved from their places and came to stand round Osra, But, she, after a moment, caught from Christian-the bag that he tossed so exultantly, crying to him: "I'll be your debtor for it;" and, bursting through the ring, she ran round the table and came to Lotta, and, pulling the girl's hands down from her face, she thrust the bug into her hands and began to talk to her, whispering low, and looking into her freightened eyes with her own shining.

"Ah, my dear," said Osra, "see, he still loves you, dear. Ah, why did I come? And I am going away; yes, now, and I shall never come here again. I do harm wherever I go. Yes, but, you'll be the prettlest girl in the village always. Otho, Otho, kiss her, Otho. Tell her you love her, Otho. Don't stand there dumb. Oh, how stupid men are! Don't you see what she wants? Yes; do it again. I nover saw anybody so pretty, Otho. Yes, yes, dear, keep the bag. It's from me; you must keep the bag. It's from me; you must keep the pretty clothes, and be prettier than ever, for Otho's sake, because he loves you." And by the time the Princess Osra had enied her consolations, behold! she was very nearly crying herself! But Lotta put her arms round the princess' neck and klased her because she said that Otho still loved her; and in her gratitude for this, she forgat thanks for the bag of crowns, or even to wonder who this girl was that could give away a thousand crowns. But in this the rest of the company were not like her, and an eager

a last hasty kiss, and made her way to Christian, crying: "Take me away."

"Ay, madam," salà he; and he put her arm in his and turned away. But all the company followed him, staring and gossiping and crowding, so that Lotta and Otho were left alone at the feast which Otho had provided, with nothing to console them but one another's love and the happily recovered thousand crowns. And the crowd pressed hard on Osra and Christian, being full of eagerness to see where the girl went and what became of her. Thus they reached the top of the hill and came in sight of Christian's cottage. But now Christian suddenly loosed Osra's arm, and, turning round, faced the throng of inquisitive folk, and with either hand he drew a silventian pointed pistol from his belt; and, when he had cocked them, he pointed them at his friends and neighbors, saying in a quiet and pleasant volce: "I shall count to twenty. Any one who means to be within range when I come to twenty had best now order his coffin."

At this a great grumbling arose among them; yet they knew Christian, and did not wait till he had counted, but one and all turned tall and ran down the hill much quicker than they had come up. But one or two fellows, resentful and malicious because of their disappointment, as soon as they found themselves out of range, turned round and shouted: "Ay, he is ready with his pistol, is Christian, We know him. Highwaymani when did you last rob?" And Christian went red as the frock that Osrawore. But she turned questioning eyes on him, "Yes," said he, sullenly, "They say highwayman. It is true. I am a robber. That is why I said, madam, that I could not live without my horse."

"Come," said Osra, "let us go to the cottage."

So they returned together to the cottage, saying nothing. And there Osra put on her own clothes again, and bade farewell to the old woman, who asked no questions of her, and mounted her horse. Then Christian said: "Shall I ride with you, madam?" And she bowed her head in assent. ing: "Take me away."
"Ay, madam." said he; and he put her arm in his and

said: "Shall I ride with you, madam?" And she bowed her head in assent.

Till they entered the forest the princess did not speak. But then she sighed, saying: "I am sorry that I went with you. For, if you had lost your horse, maybe you would have ceased from your way of life. It is better to lose a horse than to be hanged."

"Madam," said he, "you speak prudently. Tet I had rather be hanged than lose him."

"I am in your debt a thousand crowns," said she; and, stopping her horse, she wrote for him an order for a thousand crowns, and she signed it with he own name, Osra, and gave It to him. And he received it, bowing very low. "You knew me all the time?" she asked.

"Yes, madam," said he. And they had now come to where he had first met her.

"Why do you live by robbery?" she asked.

"For the love of the same thing that made you come with me to-day, madam."

"But could you not find what you love in the king's service?"

do not like service, madam," said Christian. "I

love to he free."

She paused for a moment, and then said in a lower tone: "Could you not endure my service, sir?"
"In that I shall now live and die, medam," said he,

"Fon my sake," said she, "rob no more,"
"What you command, madam, is my law. And here
is your ring."
"Keep the ring," she said. "But when I can serve
you, you shall send it back to me, and ask what you will
in return for it."
"There is nothing," said he, yery low, and looking
away from her, "that I would take in exchange for it."
"A foolish man, or only a foolish speuch?" she asked as
lightly as she could, with one fleeting glance at his face.
"A foolish man, madam, it may be but a true speech."
And he bent, bareheaded, in his saddle, and raised her
hand to his lips. And, still bareheaded, he turned away
and rode back at a canter into the forest. But the
Princess Osra rode on to the castle, wondering greatly at
what she had done that day.

Princess Osra rode on to the castle, wondering greatly at what she had done that day.

Yet she could not be very sorry that she had saved his horse for him, and she trusted that Otho and Lotta would be happy; and she thought that one man was, after all, as good fiesh and blood as another; and then that she was a princess and he a robber, and that his eyes had been overbold; yet there was deference in them also.

'It is a great pity that he should be a robber," sighed the princess as she reached the castle.

The Princess Osra's carrisgs was within two miles of Strelsau when she put her head out of the window and asked the officer who rode by the wheel why such a throng of people hastened to the city.

"It is nothing, madam," answered he saluting. "It

"It is nothing, madam," answered he, saluting. "It is only that two rogues are to be hanged to-day," "What pleasure is there in seeing men hanged?" asked Osra, sorrowfully. "I wish I had not come to-day," and she drew her head back in great disgust. And she called: "Go slowly, and let me not get into the middle of the wild beasts who go to gloat over men being harged."

So the horses were checked to a walk, and thus the carriage proceeded slowly toward Strelsau. But presently the princess put her head out of the window again, and asked: "Who are to be hanged to-day, sir?"

"The noted highwayman figismund Kohl, madam," said he. "He robbed the archbishop's codich in the forest of Zenda; but they pursued him over the frontier and

of Zenda; but they pursued him over the frontier and tracked him to the cottage of the other rogue, who had had a part in many previous robberles, though not in this. And the second fellow hid Kohi and tried to put off the officers, but they caught them both, and both are to be hanged."

"It seems hard," said Osra, "to hang the one who only sheltered his friend. He could do not less."

"Nay, madam, he richly deserves it. Besides his previous robberles, he is gravely suspected of a most foul murder. For a few week ago he was in company with a girl, and she seemed to have money and to spare, and was nighty pretty, too, they say. And now he can give no account of what has become of her; but they have found all the clothes which she wore, hidden away in fils house, and he says his mother bought the clothes. But they are a girl's clothes, not an old woman's. It boks black; but, luckly, the other matter is sure enough to hang him on. His mother's clothes, in truth! Would an old woman, who died three weeks ago, have bought a new red frock and smart red stockings for herself?"

The Princess Osra leaned suddenly farther forward, and she asked breathlessly: "A red frock? Red stockings? And the mother's dead? Dead of what?"

"Of a chill, madam, such as carries old people off suddenly. Yes, it looks black, and so the people think; for when they were brought into the city, though the ruscals cheered Kohl, who had only robbed the archishop, they pelted and came near to killing Christian Hants."

The princess' face went pale, and she sank back, murnuring; "Christian Hantz." But in another moment she orled: "At what hour is the hanging?"

"At neon, madam; that is a half hour from new."

Then the princess orled in a loud, urgent ione; "Faster, faster! Drive at top speed!" and the officer looked at her in wonder; but she cried: "A hundred crowns to the conclimant fit be brings me to the place before noon. Quick! quick!" For she was all on fire at the thought that Christian Hants was to be hanged, not for any new robbery, but bec

Osra sprang from the carriage, and she said: "You have two men with you. For God's sake, gentlemen, bring me through to the foot of the gibbet. I care not if it costs me my life."

"Nor we, madam, though it costs us odes since your pleasure," they said, as every man in the city would have said for the Princess Osra. And the two men went ahead, and Osra followed with the officer; and pushing and striving, and dodging in and out—ay, and, when need was, hitting and buffeting and kicking—the three took her through, into the square of the cathedral. And the clock in the great tower struck noon.

As the bell boomed, a cry went up from the thronged square, and the body of a man shot from the scaffold to the top of the gibbet and hung there. And the people cried, some cheering, some also groaning and weeping.

cried, some cheering, some also groaning and weeping.

"Who is it?" Who is it?" cried the princess.

"It is Sigismund Kohi, madam," said the officer.

"Then on, on, on!" she cried, and again they struggled forward. But now a louder and fiercer cry rang out as a man was brought forward on the scaffold, in his shirt and hreeches. A priest was with him, holding it criefits before his eyes. King Rudolph, who sat a window of his palace, asked why they delayed to string the rascal up, and one of his gentlemen answered: "Sire, the priest begged a few minutes' delay. For the obstinate rouge will not confess to the murder of the girl, and therefore cannot receive absolution, and the priest is loath to have him hanged without it."

"He shall be hanged without it. unless his conscience."

therefore cannot receive absolution, and the priest is loath to have him hanged without it."

"He shall be hanged without it, unless his conscience act quickly," said the king. But a moment later he asked: "What is the tumult in the corner of the square? There is a fight there. Let it be seen to."

And, indeed, there was a fight, for the three with Osra were bent on getting through and the crowd would not let them through; and they struck at the crowd, and the crowd at them. But suddenly some one, peering past the guards, exclaimed: "The princes! the princess!" And then the blows ceased, and the crowd began slowly to give back, making way for Osra, and she walked between wall of people, yet did not seem to see or take heed of any of them, but her eyes were glued to the man on the scaffold. For even now the priest, who had held the crueffix, turned sorrowfully away, and signed with his hand to the hangman.

Again the people shouted flercely for Christian's death; and he, stepping forward, gave himself into the executioner's hand. Those who were near him saw that there was a smile on his lips, and, as the hangman took hold of him, he kissed a little packet which he held in his right hand. But the people shrieked loudly: "Murderer! Where is the girl?" At this, stuns heyond endurance, Christian cried, so loudly that his voice rose above the chamer: "I am no murderer; I did not touch a hair of her head."

"Then where is she? where is she?" they shouted.

"Then where is she? where is she?" they shouted.

"The or he way a man is a low."

touch a hair of her head."

"Then where is she? where is she?" they shouted.

"I do not know," said he; and he acaded in a low tone, kissing his little packet again: "Wherever she is, God in His graciousness send her joy." And he turned to the executioner, saying: "Get on, man." But then he looked, as it were for the last time, on the living sea, of faces round him, and suddenly, out of all of them, he saw one.

What Chaletter

of faces round him, and suddenly, out of all of them, he saw one.
What Christian saw, the king saw also, and he rose from his chair with an oath and a laugh.
"This sister of mine is a wonderful wench," said he, "Come, let us see why she will not have this rescellinged. Run, some one, and tell them not to string him up till I give the word."

And the king walked out of the palace and came into the square, the guard parting the people before him and Osra, seeing him coming, stood now quite still, blushing and smiling, although she was very ashamed and panted sorely. Then the king came and faced her, saying nothing, but lifting his eyebrows and smiling whimsically, but at last he whispered: 'Whati was there a man in

sorely. Then the superiors and smiling whimsically ing, but lifting his eyebrows and smiling whimsically but at last he whispered: "What! was there a man in the forest, Osra?"

And who answered: "Do not ask me that, sire, but ask Christian Hantz what is in the packet that he kissed as the hangman took hold of him."

"He is not only a robbor, but a murderer also, though will not own it."

packet."

"Then come and look with me," said the king, and, taking her hand, he led her up on to the seaffold, in sight of all the people, who wendered and laughed, for they always laughed at the ways of Princess Osra. But she flew straight across to Christian, who fell on ons knee, with the rope round his neck. "Give me the packet," she cried, and she tore it open. And in it sho found her order for a thousand crowns, and the sem engraved with the royal arms. For an instant she looked at Christian, and then she said: "You have not got money for the order. Yet my name was good for a thousand crowns."

"To me, madam, it was better than 50,000."

ring. I could have saved you."
But you would have kept it in return for the service.

madam."

"Ay sir, that was the bargain," said Osra, with a lituo low laugh.

"I knew it. And I preferred to die with it rather than live without it."

"Another foolish speech."

"Another foolish speech."

"Yes; for the man is foolish, madam."

"And they cry to you. "Where is the girl?" And you,
do not answer, but die under a foul charge!"

To this Christian Hants made no answer at all, uniess it were one to murmur mournfully: "And, madam,
they have taken form me the red skirt and —."

The Princess Osra suddenly turned from him and went
to the king, who had stood regarding her, and she knelt
down before him, saying: "Sire and dear brother, pardon
this man. He did but shelter his friend, and he will rob
no more."

"I might forgive him his robberies, if he would take

"I might forgive him his lower service in my army."

"Yes, in my regiment of Guards?" she cried.

"But how shall I forgive that foul murder, of which he is certainly guilty? For where, sister, is the pretty girl of whom no traces can be found, saving her dress, her red skirt, and —"

"Sire, these things—I pray you, sire, let your gentlement stand a little back."

he is certainty guitty. For whom he found, saving her dress, her red skirt, and ——"

"Sire, these things—I pray you, sire, let your gentlemen stand a little back."

"Bland abok, then, gentlemen," said the king.

"These things, sire, were, by strange chance, in the little parcel that the poor man kissed. Though why he kissed it, I know not."

The king took Osra's order for a thousand crowns, and also the gem engraved with the royal arms, and he looked at them and at his sister.

"Therefore, sire," said she, "I ask pardon and life for the most courteous gentleman in your dominions; for he prized my ring above his life, and my secret above his honor. Bire, such men should live and not die."

The king turned to his officers and said: "Gentlemen, the princess knows that the girl is alive and well, and has no complaint against this man. For he might not in honor tell who or where she was. And, for the rest, he did but shelter his friend, and my sister is surety that the will rob no more. May he live?"

And when they heart this, they all declared that Christian should live, and they went into the crowd and told the people that the girl was found. And then the people suddenly vecred round and began to cheer Christian, and some oried: "Who is the girl?" and laushed merrily, conceiving that it was a love affair in which Christian had been engaged; and because he preferred to die under an imputation of murder rather than endanger his love's reputation, he became a hero with them; and when they heard he was not to die, they dispersed in the utmost good temper, cheering him and the king, and, above all, the Princess Osra, whom they loved.

But she went again to Christian, and bade the hangman take the rope off his neck.

"Will you serve me in my regiment of Guards, sir?" she asked, "or is service still irisome to you?"

It is well, sir, I irust you will serve faithfully. I bid you farewell, sir;" and she bowed slightly and turned as if to leave him. And he said nothing, but stood looking at him, self to leave him. And he sa

But the princess laughed softly, and rubbed the ring her finger, as she unswered: "Ay, sire, I call that on her finger, as she answered; the best of courtes."